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ABSTRACT

This report presents a brief overview of the literature on teacher moonlighting and a description of a survey of physical education teachers in New York State who moonlight. A presentation of the findings includes a profile of the moonlighting physical education teacher who is typically male, married with dependents, and teaching at the secondary level. In a discussion of the implications of the study, questions are raised about the reasons teachers give for taking supplimentary jobs, and the effects working outside of the school may have on teaching effectiveness. (JD)

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THE MOONLIGHTING EXPERIENCES OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN NEW YORK STATE

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INTRODUCTION

Teachers are perpetually annoyed by the general perception that their jobs are made easy by short work days, long weekends and frequent vacations. Comments such as "look at all the time off" and "you only have to work a seven hour day" are commonplace. The public impression of life as a teacher, however, is not borne out by the facts. Many teachers work well beyond those ten months and seven hour days. In fact, according to the NEA (1982), half of all teachers hold multiple jobs.

Employment in several jobs, commonly called "moonlighting", is rarely subject to restriction and has become an accepted part of the career pattern for teachers. The extra source of employment is neither a new phenomenon nor an uncommon practice among teachers (Wisniewski and Kleine, 1984). Nevertheless, moonlighting is a fact of life in education that is rarely recognized in explicit terms and has been subject to surprisingly little study (Divoky, 1978).

Below the surface of common, unspoken acceptance and lack of formal recognition, however, there is uneasiness and a sense that moonlighting may be dysfunctional for teachers, or that it may be symptomatic of serious and unexamined defects in education. It is assumed by many that moonlighting has a negative effect on the teacher's classroom performance. There is little direct evidence in the literature to support this assumption, although such failure may be as much the result of inadequacies in the knowledge base as a reflection of what actually happens in the classroom. If we do not know even the extent of the phenomenon, or the motives which lead teachers to engage in it, then debates about consequences are no more than speculation.

No doubt teachers moonlight for a variety of reasons. Although Boyer (1983) believes firmly that "for many teachers moonlighting has become essential" (p. 166), there is a wide range of attitudes about the practice of moonlighting and its effects on teachers' lives and careers. Wisniewski and Kleine (1983), for example, believe that teachers moonlight to supplement low salaries. Though the amount of money earned by moonlighting teachers usually is small, it provides a minimal increase in socioeconomic status (Wisniewski and Kleine, 1984). In a very different direction, Sikes (1983) believes that a second job compensates for the dissatisfaction felt in teaching. In the context of such diversity the present study was intended only to lay a descriptive foundation.

The report given here will include (a) a brief overview of the literature on teacher moonlighting, (b) description of a survey of physical educators in New York State who moonlight, (c) presentation of selected findings, and (d) discussion of the implications.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A caveat must precede this brief review of the literature on teacher moonlighting. The process of constructing, piloting and refining the survey instrument used in this study revealed the fact that for most of the important questions concerning teachers' moonlighting behaviors and dispositions, the answer given will be powerfully shaped by the structure of the instrument and the exact phrasing of the question. Slightly different questions elicit markedly different responses.

That being the case, it is not possible to perform a full

review of all the items in the relevant literature unless one has access to the instruments used in each study. Comparing sheep and goats may be good exercise, but it makes poor science. Accordingly, comparisons among the results of the various studies are limited to those instances where it was possible to confirm that the questions used in survey questionnaires or interview protocols were reasonably similar. At the least, this has the virtue of producing a relatively short review.

Similarly, the definition of moonlighting established in prior studies differed considerably, therefore creating a variety of findings and conclusions. Not only must one be aware of questionnaire items, but also of the underlying definition and the accompanying assumptions about moonlighting.

Definitions of Moonlighting

In the education literature, the definitions of moonlighting include (a) working for additional compensation outside the school district during the school year (Burch, 1966; Stewart, 1981), (b) supplementing salary outside the school district when school is not regularly in session (Gumm, 1968; Tucker, 1965), and (c) working both inside or outside the school district at any time for compensation (Wisniewski and Kleine, 1983).

Differences in the underlying definition of the teacher's role complicate construction of a consistent and concise definition of moonlighting. There are conflicting perceptions about where a teacher's regular workload begins and ends. Some researchers believe that taking on extra duties within the school is part of teaching responsibilities. This assumption is reinforced by many

teachers and administrators who either take part in or encourage involvement in extra-curriculuar activites. Wisniewski and Kleine (1983), on the other hand, believe that teaching in the classroom is a full-time commitment and any additional work constitutes an overload. Not surprisingly, then, they have noted that the benefits of extra income obtained from other work, whether inside or outside the school setting, must be evaluated for its effects on teaching.

Incidence of Teacher Moonlighting

When compared to the general population of workers, over the last twenty years teachers have comprised the largest single vocational group of moonlighters. Specifically, teachers working below the college level have the highest rate of moonlighting activity in the United States. The NEA (1982) reported that over half of the surveyed teachers obtained income from sources other than teaching. Wisniewski and Kleine (1987) found that 59% of their respondents received remuneration for work conducted either inside or outside the school setting at any time of the year.

Who Moonlights and Why

Generally, most studies agree on the profile of a moonlighting teacher. Stewart (1981) conducted a study of full-time teachers who held multiple jobs and found that younger, male secondary school teachers with dependents were most typical of those who moonlighted. Henderson et al. (1982) found that over 42% of the teachers who moonlighted were male, even though they constituted less than 20% of the entire sample. Henderson's survey also found that 78% of all males and 31% of the females were the major bread winners in their

family. In one of the most recent studies, Wisniewski (1987) reported that 80% of the male and 50% of the female teachers moonlight. Finally, the majority of both male and female moonlighters were secondary teachers. Married male secondary teachers whose spouses are not major contributors to the family income are almost universally destined to moonlight at some point in their careers.

In addition to information about who moonlights, several studies collected information from teachers about why they hold multiple jobs. Historically, teachers' wages never have been competitive with other professionals' earnings. In fact, teachers in 1841 made less than scrubwomen and day laborers (Lortie, 1975, p. 7). This situation continues into the 1980s. One teacher commented on the situation: "the only good thing about my salary is that I qualified for a low income housing loan from FMHA" (Henderson, et al. 1982, p.10).

In 1983, Wisniewski and Kleine discovered that the two most common reasons cited for moonlighting were to pay off debts and to enhance the family standard of living. Four years later, Wisniewski (1987) found that the most frequently selected reason for teachers to moonlight was to maintain their current standard of living. Stewart (1981) reported that 43% of her respondents held extra jobs to meet the cost of supporting self and family. Similarly, Sekscenski (1980) looked at moonlighting women in the general population and found that 34% stated that they moonlighted to meet regular expenses. Finally, the relationship between moonlighting and meeting economic needs was further supported by Stewart's (1981) finding that non-moonlighters generally had higher salaries than

their peers who moonlighted. A teacher in McGinley's (1979) study summed it up succintly: "If your spouse doesn't work and you are supporting a family, the choice not to have outside employment is a choice of life style" (p. 1).

Divoky (1978) looked to the bright side of moonlighting in suggesting that the public actually gains from teachers' resourcefulness in finding extra jobs to supplement their salaries, thereby enabling them to remain in teaching. From Divoky's perspective, moonlighting is an "escape valve" alleviating economic pressures that encourage defection from teaching, thus encouraging qualified professionals to stay in education.

From a different perspective, Sikes (1983) related the activity of moonlighting to the life cycle of the teacher: "Some decide that the returns are not worth the effort and so cut down on what they do, while others build up an alternative career" (p. 49). In other words, teaching for some becomes a dead end and extra jobs can compensate for the unrest found in teaching. Ball and Goodson (1983) also suggested that work outside teaching "may provide... psychological withdrawal from teaching" (p. 22). Bennet (1983) illustrated the dead end feeling some teachers have and the possibilities for personal growth in an outside job with an excerpt from an interview with an art teacher.

> I was fortunate, through circumstances, that I achieved promotion early and quickly. But I can really only move sideways now. So I am stuck. The only way for me to diversify is to do things outside school, which I'm starting to do. Perhaps I can see my career expanding that way (p. 127).

Thus, although there are many studies that show financial need to be the motivating factor in moonlighting, some researchers have found that the school environment and lack of growth opportunities also contribute to pushing people out of education and into concurrent careers (Ball and Goodson, 1983; Sikes, 1983).

To summarize, it is clear that many teachers hold multiple jobs to supplement salaries and maintain a standard of living. In contrast, however, there is an additional interpretation which is less directly supported by survey data and more the result of the informal association of researchers with teachers. This second hypothesis suggests that the school environment may so contribute to isolation, frustration and lack of growth, that it prompts teachers to look elsewhere for an environment that would encourage growth, relieve frustrations and reduce isolation.

Moonlighting Activities

Teachers have a variety of ways to supplement their incomes. Due to the daily and yearly school schedule, they are not engaged in obligatory school tasks during afternoons, evenings, weekends, breaks during the school year, and summer vacations. Teachers also have the choice of working inside or outside the school district, as well as in education or an alternate field.

Many teachers find their second jobs inside the school setting. NEA (1982) reported that 35% of the teachers surveyed earned extra income inside the school setting. A number of teachers in the Wisniewski and Kleine (1983) study (44%) earned extra income through their involvement with programs inside the school setting while only 31% of the teachers performed services outside the school. Coaching

athletic teams was the number one means of earning income inside the school system (Gumm, 1968; Wisniewski and Kleine, 1983, 1984). The heaviest time obligation, however, occurs during the summer, when 42% of the teachers worked full-time (35.4 hours/week).

Most second jobs held by teachers required little education or experience, prompting Tucker (1965) and Wisniewski and Kleine (1983) to conclude that moonlighting teachers would do almost anything. Even remuneration for school-related tasks generally is limited by budgetary constraints, therefore resulting in relatively low pay for in-house services (Divoky, 1978; McGinley, 1979).

Teachers' Thoughts About Moonlighting

Though moonlighting is a common phenonmenon in the teaching profession we know little about how teachers who moonlight think about their professional and personal lives. This section reports findings of the studies focused on investigating how teachers think about their second jobs.

Studies show that teachers have conflicting views about the effects of moonlighting on their teaching performance. In a questionnaire distributed to teachers in Oklahoma, 44% of the respondents thought a second job was degrading to the education profession and that teachers who hold multiple jobs could contribute to the deteriorating status of the teacher in our society (Wisniewski and Kleine, 1983). In a survey of Texas public school teachers (Maddux, 1980), 64% of the respondents who moonlighted stated that their teaching would improve if they didn't hold other job responsibilities. Wisniewski and Kleine (1983) found that 20% believed moonlighting hindered teaching performance and 29% thought

it hindered preparation for teaching. One teacher illustrates this in his thoughts about the relative priorities he assigns to teaching and his second job:

> It's a job [teaching]-- nothing more. I need the money, but I don't put more into it than I have to. My real life is with the band. That means I often come in exhausted in the morning - my main aim is to keep the kids quiet -- off my back...I'm not the only one who sees it this way, you know...we talk about it...If society doesn't put itself out for us, why should we bother for them? Individuals become separated from their work.
>
> (Nias, 1983, p. 111)

Stewart (1981) contradicted these findings on the basis of her study of full-time teachers holding multiple jobs. These teachers generally perceived minimal effects on their teaching responsibilities. They believed that supplemental employment had a negative effect on their mental health and recreation time, but created only minimal effects on teaching performance.

Bennet (1983), in a study of art teachers, suggested that though moonlighting may promote an increase in the teacher's general knowledge about the world, it could also lead teachers out of the profession. Divoky (1978) supports this perspective in concluding that when the moonlighting job becomes more important than the teaching position, this may motivate the teacher to leave the classroom, to consider teaching a part-time position, or to abuse the autonomy enjoyed in a profession where there is little direct supervision of work performance.

Moonlighting may take a toll on an individual's personal life,

on their professional career, or on both. Whatever the case, many researchers believe that the effects of moonlighting have not been adequately explored.

STUDY: MOONLIGHTING EXPERIENCES AMONG PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN NEW YORK STATE

Purpose

In the fall of 1987, a random sample of physical education teachers from New York State was surveyed to determine their moonlighting experiences. The purposes of this study were to assess (a) the incidence of moonlighting among physical educators, (b) the types of multiple jobs held, (c) the profile of the moonlighter, (d) the reasons given for holding multiple jobs, and (e) the teachers opinion concerning the impact of moonlighting on their teaching.

Procedures

The design of the instrument and survey procedures followed the research format developed by Dillman (1978). The mail questionnaire was constructed in part from questions used in previous surveys and in part from new questions designed to meet the purposes of the study. Each item was refined by pilot testing procedures which provided feedback from teachers, graduate students and university faculty.

The State Education Department supplied a list of all the physical educators in New York State employed in 1986-87 school year. The questionnaire was distributed in October to 500 public school physical education teachers randomly selected from that list

and stratified by gender. Two follow-up mailings took place after the initial distribution. The first was a postcard distributed to all the participants and the second was a complete re-mailing to all nonrespondents. Code numbers placed on each survey allowed identification for follow-up purposes. Otherwise, all responses were anonymous. Three hundred sixty-four teachers responded for a return rate of 73%.

Moonlighting was defined as any work for which teachers earn extra income beyond their contracted teaching salary. This included work performed inside or outside the school, during vacations and summers, on school nights or weekends, on a regular or irregular basis, and voluntarily or out of necessity. The participants were asked to keep this definition of moonlighting in mind when responding to the questionnaire and to limit their responses to personal experiences over the previous two years which matched the criteria for inclusion.

Findings

Of those who responded, 83% reported involvement in some sort of moonlighting activity. Over half held two to three moonlighting jobs in the two year span covered by the survey. Of those who moonlight, the majority (89%) held multiple jobs in the school during the school year, with over half involved in coaching athletic teams. Working summers outside the school setting involved almost half of the respondents, with the most common forms of employment being physical education related activities, construction, and jobs in the service industry. Just over 40% indicated that they worked during the school year outside the school setting -- largely at the

same types of jobs reported for summer employment.

The profile of the moonlighting physical education teacher was typically a married male with 1 to 4 dependents who possessed a master's degree plus additional graduate hours, earned a teaching salary greater than $30,000, taught at the secondary level in a suburban district, and planned to remain in teaching until retirement. A female elementary teacher would be the least likely candidate to hold multiple jobs.

The moonlighters reported quite unambiguous reasons for moonlighting during both the school year and summers. During the school year, teachers reported moonlighting because they enjoyed the work (53%), regarded it as a professional responsibility (42%), or were pursuing personal interest and opportunities for growth (34%). Although enjoyment (29%) also led reports of motivation for summer employment, financial concern took a larger part as reflected in the next most common motives for summer work: to pay off debts (28%) and to upgrade lifestyle (25%).

The teachers were asked to indicate their estimate of the impact of moonlighting on their performance as teachers. The overall response reflected a highly optimistic assessment. The majority of those who moonlight during the school year felt their teaching was completely unaffected. Less than 20% reported that moonlighting activities detracted from their teaching. Over 60% of the respondents indicated that moonlighting during the summer actually enhanced their subsequent teaching performance, while only 5% felt it detracted from their teaching. It is not trivial to note, however, that with regard to involvement in professional development activities, one fourth of the respondents reported a

decrease in participation when inservice programs were in competition with supplemental employment of any kind.

Discussion

Problems of both construct definition and semantics became apparent as survey responses were read and coded for computer analysis. The term moonlighting had been selected for use in this study because it seemed to be a catchy, convenient and value free label. I was quite unprepared to discover that many respondents discerned a negative connotation in the word and resented the fact that their "other" job was being maligned as mere "moonlighting". There also was concern with the decision to define moonlighting as including non-contracted jobs within the school. Many of the teachers felt that such work was part of their professional responsibility, contracted or not! That enjoyment and professional responsibility were the two most common reasons given for moonlighting during the school year underscores the positive place of such work in the physical educator's career structure.

Although comparison data are not available, physical educators may play a more expanded role in the school setting than the classroom teacher. By nature of their interests and training, they have access to a number of supplemental employment opportunities which are unavailable to many other teachers. Among these are coaching athletic teams, working in after-school recreation, running fitness programs and leading other activity-related components of the curriculum.

Besides the simple encouragement of opportunity, by moonlighting physical educators may be responding to their

professional status within the school setting. Physical education teachers often are thought of as lower class citizens among educators. Coaching provides physical education teachers with an attractive means not only to earn extra income, but also to enhance professional self-esteem. Working with an athletic team, one can receive the rewards of recognition from students, parents, administrators and community.

A physical education teacher's third period basketball class or sixth period hockey class rarely receives notice of any kind, much less recognition for excellence. The low status of physical education is reflected in administrators' decisions to schedule physical education classes last, cut budgets for equipment, and overload classes. In addition, the administrative expectations for student learning in physical education frequently are low, non-serious or non-existent -- particularly when compared with the expectations held for biology or English teachers. Expectations for competent leadership in school sports make demands like those in prestigious academic areas and provide even greater rewards.

The school environment appears also to play a role in moonlighting activities. The fact that secondary physical education teachers are far more likely to moonlight than elementary teachers may be a phenomenon related to gender, age, experience, salary or any other variable associated with the two populations. A very different explanation is available, however, in the fact that school environment makes truly satisfying teaching nearly impossible given conditions for physical education in the secondary school workplace. Class size, budget restrictions, schedule problems, limited facilities, and conflicts with coaching roles make secondary

programs increasingly recreational and less instructional. Secondary teachers actually may find a satisfactory professional teaching role only within the realm of coaching, while their elementary level colleagues may find more possibility for challenge in their physical education classes. Coaching athletic teams may be the primary reason that many secondary level physical education teachers remain in teaching. In the literature, moonlighting has been linked to teacher attrition, whereas in physical education it may aid in keeping teachers in the field.

There is no doubt that taking supplemental employment extracts a toll on the cherished dream that teachers will regard themselves as professionals, or that the general public will elevate them to such status. Doctors and lawyers don't work at Stop & Shop on weekends. A pattern has developed that foreshadows the self-fullfilling prophecy -- if teachers are not treated and compensated like professionals they are forced to do what true professionals would never do. This in turn provides evidence for those who do not regard educators as professionals. Physical education teachers are locked in a cycle without escape, and from that perspective moonlighting may be seen as no more than a symptom of an underlying problem.

Clearly the results of this study call for the investigation of moonlighting teachers and for reseach that goes far beyond the limits of a mail questionnaire. I am convinced that direct, systematic and intensive conversation with people who are involved in multiple jobs would expose a wealth of information. We need to understand how moonlighting shapes both private and public perspectives on teachers. Are those jobs that fill the vacant hours

away from teaching a pleasant diversion, a happy supplement to inadequate income, or a cancer eating away at the possibilities for our professional future? More speculation will not help. It is time for data.

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